

# Elkhorn Summer Yurt Guide

Over 50 miles of old roads and single-track trails can be accessed from Elkhorn Yurt, which is located about halfway around the Elkhorn loop trail. Its high elevation of 6,400 feet offers spectacular views to the north, east, and south. In the evening, a warm orange alpenglow reflects off Wolf, Goat, and Steele Mountains to the east. This is the place to “get away from it all” and watch the wildlife. Elk, deer, bear, and mountain lions are often seen nearby. As the snow melts, hundreds of mushrooms, including the tasty Morel, can be found growing in the dense woods and nearby burn areas.

Please read the information below and all the other documents. This important information outlines the risks involved while traveling to and from and staying at a backcountry yurt. It is best practice to provide a copy to everyone in your party, particularly of the yurt code and maps.

You will receive your yurt code in a reservation confirmation email two weeks prior to your reservation date and again one day prior to your reservation date. If you make a reservation and do not receive a confirmation email, please contact the Idaho City Backcountry Yurt Ranger, Zane Patterson, at [zane.patterson@idpr.idaho.gov](mailto:zane.patterson@idpr.idaho.gov) or (208) 514-2418.

Check-in time is 3 PM MST and check-out time is 11 AM MST.

No dogs are allowed at Elkhorn Yurt from December 1<sup>st</sup> through April 15<sup>th</sup>. Dogs are welcome at the yurt the rest of the year, but please adhere to our pet policy found [here](#) and on the front page of the binder inside the yurt.

Watch [this video](#) to learn what to expect during your stay.

## Getting to Elkhorn Yurt

Elkhorn Yurt: 44.023113, -115.587024 and 6,441 feet

To access the Elkhorn Yurt, you will start at the Banner Ridge Park N' Ski Parking lot, off Highway 21. The Banner Ridge Park N' Ski parking lot is located at 44.023719, -115.605950 and is 23.5 miles north of Idaho City on Highway 21 just past mile marker 61. Across from the Banner Ridge Park N' Ski parking lot, turn right off the highway onto gravel road 385. You will immediately pass a toilet on your left. As you continue up the road, you will see blue diamond shaped blazes located on trees and posts along the road. The road will climb until you reach the top of the ridge. Stay on road 385 and do not turn off on any side roads. You will pass the Banner Ridge Yurt summer parking lot, marked with a 2-foot yellow diamond shaped sign attached to a post on your left. To get to Elkhorn Yurt, turn right at the fork near the Banner Ridge parking lot on road 385C. Follow road 385C for about a mile until you see another 2-foot yellow diamond sign attached to a post. This sign marks the summer parking lot for Elkhorn

Yurt. You will see a trail that takes off south from the parking area. Follow the five-inch yellow diamond blazes marking the trail until you arrive at the yurt. **You cannot see the Elkhorn Yurt from the 385 road or the summer parking area.**

A high clearance vehicle is recommended.

Elevation change and distance: From the summer parking area, you will ascend about 50 feet over 200 yards via the yurt access trail.

### **Safety Information:**

Read the valuable information in this document and study the maps. The attached maps are georeferenced; if you open them in the Avenza app while you have cell service, you can use them to navigate even after you lose service.

Yurt tours are not recommended during storm warnings or strong winds. Check the weather forecast before you leave, but weather conditions at the Idaho City Backcountry Yurts can be unpredictable and severe. It is important to be prepared for any condition. Before departing, make sure your vehicle can withstand cold temperatures.

For a forecast, click [here](#).

Know your way and keep all members of your party together. Make sure all members of your party have their own copies of the area maps and know how to use them. If you decide to explore the nearby trails and roads, travel at the pace of the slowest member of your party.

If possible, take a day trip to the yurt prior to your reservation to familiarize yourself with surrounding landmarks and learn route-finding tricks that will help you locate the yurt again. Let someone know where you are going and when you expect to return home.

Be prepared for emergencies by bringing everything on the recommended packing list. Always be prepared to stay at the yurt for longer than expected. Be prepared to spend a night outside if you are unable to locate the yurt.

Bring a satellite communication device. There is very limited cell phone coverage at the yurts. You can find cell phone coverage for some cell phone systems at the high point on road 385 once you are on the top of Banner Ridge. There is also possible coverage on Stargaze trail near Highway 21. The closest public telephone is in Lowman and the second closest is at the rest area in downtown Idaho City. Call the Boise County Sheriff at (208) 392-4411 or in a medical emergency call 911.

Road closures are a possibility with any backcountry adventure, and it is why we provide so much information on the website to prepare our guests for their trip. In the case of a road closure, please stay put at the yurt until you know that the road is open. The potential for unforeseen road closures is why we recommend bringing a satellite-based communication device such as an inReach or a Somewear and notifying someone back home of your trip. Using

a satellite communication device, you can contact your party back home to verify if the road is open. Most importantly, if the road is closed, please stay put inside the yurt. Do not try to drive down the road until ITD clears it. For road conditions, visit ITD's online map [here](#).

It is possible that a yurt can be damaged by extreme weather conditions, which are common in Idaho's mountains. High winds, heavy storms, and falling branches from trees could cause rips, tears and/or partial or total collapse. It is also possible that the yurt can be vandalized, or items stolen. These possibilities point out the need to be well prepared. Please report any damage or problems to IDPR.

## Other Guidelines

Because of the backcountry nature of the yurts, staff cannot service them between every guest. IDPR depends heavily on guests to pack out what they pack in and to clean the yurts for the next guests. Step-by-step cleaning instructions can be found in the binder in each yurt.

Do not climb on the chimney structure; it was not designed to handle a person's weight.

In each yurt, you should find two bunk beds with covered foam mattresses, a futon and mattress (which converts to a double bed), a table, chairs, a kitchen cabinet, a two-burner propane stove, a solar panel and LED lights, a wood stove, a log rack, a tinder bucket, an ash bucket, assorted silverware, plates, bowls, cups, a plastic food storage container, assorted cooking pots and pans, miscellaneous kitchen equipment, a mop, a broom, a dust pan, a dome opener, and a fire extinguisher. Located outside, you should find an axe, a maul, a hatchet, a buck saw, a primitive toilet, a fire pit, a picnic table, and a woodpile. Because of the remote location, it may take us several weeks to replace/repair the item(s). Be prepared and adaptable enough to survive without these items.

You must haul in your own drinking water in the spring, summer, and fall seasons. A non-potable water tank is located onsite and is refilled about every three weeks. Do not count on the tank being full. **This water is not for drinking but can be used for cleaning and washing.** Please conserve water so others have water for their stay.

Each yurt is equipped with a wood stove for heating. Wood for the wood stove is located under the deck. Please do not use the firewood under the deck to make fires in the outdoor fire ring. If you want to make a fire outside, gather dead, dry logs and branches from around the yurt.

Each yurt is also equipped with a two-burner propane stove for cooking. Carefully read the directions for the cook stove on the yurt wall. You need to bring at least one (1) one-pound screw in bottle of propane for each night you plan to stay.

This yurt is also equipped with solar powered LED lights. Should it be necessary, a brush is provided to remove snow from the panel. Please do not change the panel location. Use the lights when needed, turn them off when not in use and at the end of your stay. Please do not feed wild animals.

Your safety is our top priority. If you feel uncomfortable visiting a yurt due to inclement weather, please do not hesitate to contact our Reservations Department at (208) 334-4199 to reschedule or cancel.

Visit our [website](#) for more information about Banner Ridge Yurt. If you have questions about the yurts or are willing to share photos of your yurt and trail adventures, please contact the Idaho City Backcountry Yurt Ranger, Zane Patterson, at [zane.patterson@idpr.idaho.gov](mailto:zane.patterson@idpr.idaho.gov) or (208) 514-2418.

## **Suggested Equipment List**

The equipment listed below is included as a guide to help you prepare for a yurt. Please pass this list on to all members of the party. Come prepared to spend the night outdoors. Dressing in layers is the best choice. As you get warm you can take off layers, and as you cool down during breaks you can put them back on. The term “synthetics” on the clothing list refers to materials such as pile, polar fleece, synthetic clothing, Lycra, or polypropylene.

### **Personal:**

- Backpack
- Sleeping bag and/or fitted sheet for bunk
- Pillow
- Sunglasses
- Emergency whistle
- High energy trail snacks
- Large water bottle
- Compass
- Boise National Forest map
- Idaho City Area Yurt and Trail System map
- Specific yurt guide and location map
- Small knife
- Toothbrush and paste
- Personal medications
- Sunscreen lotion and Chapstick
- Headlamp or small flashlight
- Extra flashlight batteries and bulb
- Small cooler for ice
- Basic first aid kit
- Plastic tarp to serve as emergency shelter
- Roll of extra toilet paper
- Clothes and shoes
  - Underwear
  - Wool socks
  - Shirts
  - Shorts
  - Pants
  - Sun hat
  - Gloves or mittens
  - Wool, polar fleece, or synthetic hat
  - Polar fleece or jacket
  - Wool, polar fleece, or synthetic long sleeve shirt
  - Wool, polar fleece, or synthetic long pants
  - Windproof and waterproof shell jacket, hood, and pants
  - Watch
  - Knee-high gaiters
  - Shoes for exploring the area
  - Slippers or booties

Group:

- Yurt door lock combination
- 2 screw-in, one pound propane canisters for each day of your stay
- Paper towels
- Food and drink enough for the duration of your stay plus a few days
- Water filter or full water jug
- Matches in a waterproof container
- Lighter and fire starter
- First aid kit that includes:
  - First aid book
  - Moleskin
  - Gauze
  - Chemical heat pack
  - Ace bandage
  - 2" first-aid tape
  - Assorted band aids including butterfly
  - Triangular bandages and sterile pads
  - Sam splint or equivalent
  - Antacid
  - Ibuprofen
  - Acetaminophen (Tylenol)
  - Benadryl
  - EpiPen
  - Antiseptic wound cleaner
  - Body thermometer
  - Latex gloves
  - Tweezers
  - Scissors
  - Nail clippers
  - Small mirror
- Emergency repair kit that includes:
  - Small roll of duct or strapping tape
  - Stick-on nylon patches
  - Nylon cord/braided wire
  - Safety pins
  - Garbage bag
  - Superglue
- Satellite communication device

Optional:

- Camera
- Binoculars
- Books
- Bicycle repair kit